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Viewing cable 06MANAGUA1961, MRS: "WE WANT TO BRING ORTEGA DOWN"

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA1961**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MANAGUA1961	2006-09-06 22:33	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0760
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 001961

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2016
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: MRS: "WE WANT TO BRING ORTEGA DOWN"

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS) spokesperson Israel Lewites (Herty Lewites' nephew) recently asserted to polcouns that the MRS is the only viable option for the 2006 election. Lewites believes that the MRS can capture some of the traditional Sandinista (FSLN) vote, enough to ensure that Daniel Ortega does not win on the first round, also predicting that many of the undecided voters will vote for the MRS. Lewites warned that Eduardo Montealegre has been tainted by the CENI (Certificados Negociables de Inversion) scandal, and if he wins the presidency, will therefore be controlled by the FSLN. Lewites described the MRS' platform and the evolution of the campaign after Herty's death. Despite what he sees as recent successes, Lewites noted that limited resources will continue to hamper the campaign and election day efforts, including the MRS' ability to send party poll watchers (fiscales) to voting centers. END SUMMARY.

"The only viable option"
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¶2. (C) In a meeting with poloffs on August 31, MRS spokesperson Israel Lewites addressed the CENI issue and Montealegre's possible involvement. He stated that the MRS is the only viable party, as Montealegre's image has been tainted. He explained that even if Montealegre were to win the presidency, the FSLN (through a pact with the PLC) would likely control the National Assembly and Montealegre would enjoy no real power. In light of the possibility of a continuing pact between the FSLN and the PLC in the Assembly, Lewites believes that the focus of the election should be on the deputy slots.

¶3. (C) Lewites emphasized that the MRS would never return to an FSLN controlled by Ortega. He expressed concern about a possible FSLN win, estimating that the FSLN can easily steal four to five percent of the vote on election day. He also pointed out the ideological differences between the ALN and the MRS, and denied any possibility that Edmundo Jarquin might step down and support Montealegre. He responded that if Jarquin resigns, the MRS votes may migrate to Ortega.

¶4. (U) Polcouns reiterated the USG position that the MRS is a viable and constructive option, with whom the United States would maintain good relations.

Campaign tactics
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¶5. (C) Lewites shared that the MRS is renewing campaign efforts and planning intensive outreach in rural areas.

Jarquín will visit the smaller cities and towns, while vice presidential candidate Carlos Mejía Godoy will concentrate on the countryside. Recent campaign efforts have focused on creating name recognition for Jarquín, wooing the youth vote, as well as capturing some of the traditional FSLN vote.

¶6. (U) Shortly after Jarquín was named as the new MRS presidential candidate, Lewites initiated a campaign -- "Vota por el feo que quiere una Nicaragua linda" (Vote for the ugly guy who wants a beautiful Nicaragua), playing on Jarquín's appearance. According to Lewites, the campaign rapidly increased recognition of Jarquín and everyone now calls him "El Feo." Another recent campaign ad mocks Daniel's appearance on July 19 riding a thoroughbred with the Nicaraguan flag tied around his neck and contrasts it with Jarquín riding a burro during a campaign rally in the countryside. Other efforts to court the youth vote include a contest for young people to write a Reggaeton song (a popular style which mixes reggae and Latin American hip hop) against corruption with a \$200 prize for the winner.

MRS Platform

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¶7. (U) MRS campaign efforts have focused on portraying the party as the only "anti-pact" option. Their campaign materials mention a "clean pact" with the people and their platform focuses on anti-corruption and services for the most disadvantaged in Nicaragua. Their "clean pact" with the people includes 14 points:

- End the PLC - FSLN pact.
- Put an end to "mega" salaries and pensions for government worker in order to increase salaries for health care workers and teachers.
- Create 500,000 new jobs, focusing on employment for youth.
- Eradicate hunger and infant malnutrition.
- Guarantee better education for children.
- Increase and improve medical services.
- Create a development bank for small producers.
- Find housing solutions for the most needy.
- Prioritize road construction for the center and north of the country; increase communication with the Caribbean Coast.
- Grant true autonomy to the RAAS and the RAAN.
- Protect Nicaraguan emigrants and ensure their right to vote.
- Improve security and safety for all Nicaraguans; stop violence against women and children.
- Promote sustainable use of natural resources.
- Develop alternative energy sources and encourage tourism and development.

¶8. (C) According to Lewites, the two key issues for the MRS are term limits in the National Assembly and the regulation of salaries. He believes that the system must be changed whereby National Assembly seats are not treated as a reward for the party faithful.

Life after Herty

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¶9. (C) Jarquín and the MRS continue to use Herty Lewites' popularity as a campaign tool, emphasizing his legacy. Jarquín does not enjoy Herty's popularity and many say he lacks Herty's charisma. During the meeting, Lewites voiced his strong support for Jarquín and satisfaction with his commitment to the party. He commented on Jarquín's dedication and honesty, but admitted that his candor recently led to a tactical mistake. Jarquín expressed his support for legalizing elective abortions, a procedure opposed by a large majority of Nicaraguans and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, as well as the other candidates (including the FSLN) publicly denounced Jarquín's position.

¶10. (C) Lewites confirmed that financial backing remains a critical issue and that the MRS has not been able to raise many funds from Herty's contacts. Embassy contacts report that several sources of funding brought to the MRS by Lewites (from Jewish communities in Panama and Europe, for example)

have run dry. Jarquin himself admits that the MRS receives minimal support from the Nicaraguan private sector, and the party has been forced to essentially cut off local candidates in lower-priority departments -- basically everywhere but the Pacific region, which contains the majority of MRS supporters.

¶11. (C) Lewites is particularly concerned about fraud on election day and not having enough funds to cover logistical expenses for the MRS fiscales. He told poloffs that the MRS' selection and preparation of party poll watchers (fiscales) is progressing. IRI has confirmed that it has trained about 30% of the MRS fiscales. According to Lewites, the MRS intends to have at least two people per voting table (JRV) on election day, but they need funds to feed and transport the fiscales and other helpers.

Comment
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¶13. (C) Lewites seems optimistic about the possibility of the MRS winning a fair number of deputy seats. Adamantly anti-Daniel, Lewites claims he views the election as a personal fight. He made a point of mentioning to poloffs that he had studied in the United States (at the University of Texas in Arlington) and believes in "the American dream" and supports responsible capitalism -- since it so clearly benefited him. Lewites is the force behind the MRS' innovative publicity campaign that has a large number of Nicaraguans talking about "El Feo." Though current polls show Jarquin in third place, if the MRS can shift votes from the FSLN and garner some of the undecided vote, it is still a viable option -- and could be the key to preventing an Ortega win.
TRIVELLI